



**National Congress of Black Women, Inc**  
**Orlando Chapter**  
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July 12, 2011

Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The economic downturn has presented significant challenges to our nation's businesses and entrepreneurs. As a result, we have felt the effects throughout the labor force. Businesses must have the resources to allow them to compete locally, nationally, and globally in a very competitive economic climate. Technology is the best resource available to businesses and is a great equalizer. Communications is the most important aspect of technology for many businesses. Communications in the form of voice and data enhances worker productivity and connects businesses with more clients and opportunities for expansion.

Just as broadband and other technologies are crucial to business, participation by women in the economy is a vital factor in assuring the advancement of women in society. Over the decades, women have fought and achieved victories for equality in the workplace. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's brought achievements which enabled African American women to better reach their full potential. Despite the successes of the past, black women still face challenges which threaten their ability to achieve full economic participation. Without a corrective strategy, lost potential for women in business will have devastating consequences on their ability to achieve a meaningful political, social, and civic voice.

As the Florida Director of the National Congress for Black Women, Inc., and Chair of the Orlando Chapter of the National Congress of Black Women, Inc., I know the issues African American women face in Florida. In this troubling economic time, the role of African American women must be reinforced. Our nation's economy relies on technology to drive innovation, growth and productivity. Therefore it is essential that women have strong technological proficiency and access to digital information. Digital access through broadband enables individuals to harness the immense economic and social power of the Internet. However, women and minorities are among the least likely to use the broadband.

AT&T has a plan to ensure that individuals, regardless of racial or gender identification, have affordable access to high speed Internet. Through their purchase of rival carrier T-Mobile, AT&T will build the largest network, providing mobile voice and data service to 97 percent of the country. Through their wireless 4G LTE mobile broadband service, 55 million more Americans will have affordable access to broadband. A considerable number of the 55 million gaining access to wireless high-speed Internet will be women, African Americans, minorities in rural areas, and other underserved groups.

The acquisition will also help deliver the promise of providing economic opportunities for women and minorities. By purchasing T-Mobile from Duetche Telecom, AT&T will be strongly positioned to hire many new employees. As a result of their commitment to diversity, I am confident that qualified minority women will receive fairness, equal pay, and opportunities for promotion throughout this new hiring. Independent groups which monitor the hiring practices of Fortune 500 firms have recognized AT&T and given them the distinction as being the best company in the wireless industry for women and minority employees.

AT&T's commitment towards women and minorities extends beyond their workplaces. They have built programs that give small businesses opportunities in their procurement network. Additionally, through business outreach they also extend a number of specific opportunities to women and minority entrepreneurs in the high-tech sector. This is a valuable partnership which is greatly needed to improve the representation of women and minorities in the technology sector. Additionally, I feel very strongly that through this merger and the expansion of broadband services, the latent entrepreneurial talents of minority women in the economy will be increased.

The AT&T – T-Mobile merger provides opportunities to allow previously disadvantaged groups to have a voice in our society. History demonstrates that it is essential women have a voice in the economic, civic, and social arenas of our country. Therefore, I ask that the Commission consider the benefits mobile broadband access brings to individuals and society, and approve the merger.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly L. Neal".

Beverly Colson Neal  
Florida Director of the National Congress of Black Women, Inc., Chair of the Orlando  
Chapter of the National Congress of Black Women, Inc.